

Substance Abuse and Child Safety Task Force Annual Report Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

The Substance Abuse and Child Safety Task Force met May 2014, June 2014, and November 2014. The Task Force is divided into five subcommittees, each having assigned to it duties as outlined in the Commission's suggested priorities. The next meeting is May 12, 2015 at 2:00pm.

Accomplishments:

- Took testimony from subject matter experts from rural and urban backgrounds.
- Establishment of a mission statement: "Explore best practices and evidenced-based research to create positive, lasting outcomes for children who abuse drugs, live in households where drug abuse exists, or who are in need of mental health treatment. To that end, our aim is to craft effective ways to address gaps in mental health and substance abuse services between urban and rural communities, the lack of long-term solutions for children with mental health and substance abuse problems in and out of the juvenile justice system, and financial barriers to receiving mental health and substance abuse treatment regardless of where families live."
- Focused conversation on identifying specific issues and finding solutions by looking at evidence based practices, treatment programs, and prevention programs.
- Examined Youth First, an Indiana organization aimed at strengthening youth and families through evidence-based programs that prevent substance abuse, promote healthy behaviors, and maximize student success.
- Identified Morgan County as jurisdiction to study due to its high drug abuse rate, high opiate prescription rate, high on expulsion/suspension rate due to drugs, and had a high rate for children visiting the emergency room due to drug use.
- Identified and removed barriers to LCSW students giving needed services to students in DOC programs. As a result, Chairman Head, IDOC Commissioner Lemmon, and IPLA Executive Director Nick Rhoad sent a letter to Indiana colleges welcoming them to enroll LSCW students in DOC youth service programs.
- Recommendation of the following Action Plan.

Action Plan:

- Continue to have subcommittees meet, discuss issues, and report to the Task Force with recommendations on how to address those issues/barriers.
- Explore how the Task Force can help in expanding access to Tele Health for substance abuse treatment for adolescents. Expand the use of Skype and FaceTime for mental health services in rural areas especially.
- Explore ways to duplicate the successes of Youth First and other similar prevention programs.

- Create a plan to encourage parents to lock up their medications; encourage pharmacies to install prescription drop boxes in their stores.
- Increase early childhood education about the effects of drugs.
- Target services where they are needed, and have a plan to train and put services where there are none.
- Look closely at teen suicide rates and how to educate children, parents, and teachers about suicide awareness and prevention.
- Work with higher education officials and the legislature to examine the possibility of reimbursing tuition and other incentives for professional education/training in child psychiatry, psychiatric nurse practitioners and for Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs).
- Study areas with greatest youth drug abuse rate; identify factors that contribute to abuse, and how to combat these factors. Continue the study of Morgan County and other counties that are in need of task force services and programs.
- Look at increasing community transition programs for youth to transition back into the community.

Timeline:

- The Task Force proposes a timeline of May 31, 2016 to fully explore, analyze data, speak to subject matter experts, and propose recommendations to the Commission.

Senator Randall Head, Chair
Substance Abuse & Child Safety Task Force